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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the characteristics of principals, students, teachers and middle-grades schools located in port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border, examining principals' opinions about the degree to which new teachers' education and preparation experiences were appropriate. The study also examined principals' opinions about how well Texas universities prepared teachers to interact with and nurture growth in students attending these schools. The 44 participating principals completed a survey that asked for demographics on the principals, schools, students, and teachers and asked questions about the three research issues. Data analysis indicated that most of the principals were male and Hispanic, most of the teachers were Hispanic, and most of the students were Hispanic and qualified for the free lunch program. This is in contrast to most schools in the U.S. and Texas. Teacher-student ratios in large schools along the border were above the national average. Principals reported highly valuing new teachers with an understanding of themes centered around the middle school, and they wanted to see preservice teachers get more exposure to middle grades classrooms. (However, there is no certification or endorsement for middle grades in Texas teacher preparation programs.) Principals believed Texas universities adequately prepared preservice teachers, but preservice teachers needed more information about working with children and parents living in poverty. (Contains 37 references.) (SM)

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THE EDUCATION AND PREPARATION EXPERIENCES PRINCIPALS SEEK IN HIRING TEACHERS FOR BORDER MIDDLE-GRADE SCHOOLS

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THE EDUCATION AND PREPARATION EXPERIENCES PRINCIPALS SEEK IN HIRING TEACHERS FOR BORDER MIDDLE-GRADE SCHOOLS

Each spring principals begin the task of looking at which faculty positions need to be filled for the coming school year. These positions come open for several reasons: retirement, teacher resignation, and student population growth to name a few. Almost simultaneously, universities graduate thousands of students eager to teach in public schools. Graduates of Texas universities are certified for either elementary or secondary education positions. In many cases, those who end up teaching in middle schools are there only until the elementary or secondary job they want opens up (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). These new middle-grade teachers are not specifically trained for working with students in the middle-grade schools (Scales & McEwin, 1994).

Calls in the literature for specific teacher preparation for middle-grade education have been going on for at least the past seventy years (Koos, 1927; Smith, 1925). The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (CCAD), in their 1989 report, wrote "teachers in middle-grade schools should be selected and specially educated to teach young adolescents" (p. 58). In This We Believe the National Middle School Association (NMSA) (1995) stated, "educators need specific preparation before they enter

middle level classrooms" (p. 14). Middle grade students not only deserve teachers who are specially prepared for their grade level, but also teachers who can take into account differences among various student ethnic groups.

The Hispanic student population is the second largest ethnic group in Texas public schools, just behind European Americans (Texas Education Agency, 1997a). Hispanics are projected to become the dominant ethnic group in Texas and its public schools before the year 2030 (Murdock, Hoque, Michael, White & Pecotte, 1995). Much of this growth will occur because of immigration from Mexico. When Mexican Nationals immigrate to the United States, their first contact with this country and its cultures will be in port of entry communities (Maril, 1992).

A logical question to ask would be, is the education and preparation suggested by experts affiliated with the NMSA appropriate for middle-grade school teachers who work in port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border? To begin to develop a basis for understanding the issues surrounding this question, an investigation of four areas of literature would be helpful. These areas include: (1) the changing demographics of the United States and Texas, (2) cross cultural interactions found in port of entry communities, (3) the educational needs of students from

Mexico, and (4) basic middle-grade school teacher preparation.

Demographics

The demographics of the United States are changing. The Hispanic population in the United States has increased by 35% between 1980 and 1990 to 22,354,000 (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1995, p. 30). Banks (1997) considers this figure low because it is estimated that 53% of the Hispanic population in the United States classified themselves as White Americans in the 1990 Census (p. 16). Assuming Banks is correct, this would put the Hispanic population at approximately 48 million, making them the largest minority population in the United States.

The demographics of Texas are changing faster than most areas of the United States. Texas has a very high Hispanic population. The 5,228,000 Hispanic residents of Texas make up 28% of the State's population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995). The Texas-Mexico border region is one of the fastest growing population areas in Texas (Murdock, Hoque, Michael, White & Pecotte, 1995).

The Hispanic student population is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in Texas. According to the Texas Education Agency (1997a) Hispanics make up 36.7% of the total state public school population. This figure is higher than the general population statistics for Hispanics in

Texas. This trend indicates a propensity for growth in the Hispanic state population. Additional increases in the Hispanic population can be attributed to immigration along the Texas-Mexico border. Projections for Texas for the year 2030 show the European American population decreasing to 36.7% while the Hispanic population increases to 45.9% (Murdock, Hoque, Michael, White & Pecotte, 1995). Thus the Hispanic population will become the largest ethnic group in Texas. Discovering the educational needs of middle-grade school students along the Texas-Mexico border region becomes of increasing importance.

Port of Entry Communities

Port of entry communities are defined as cities or towns located along the Texas-Mexico border with United States Customs Service Officials stationed to check people and/or foreign goods into the United States. Port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border are the locations where the European American, Mexican American, and Mexican National cultures first meet (Maril, 1992). This location, where the initial interaction of these three cultures occurs, creates unique communities. Two unique features of these communities are the ethnic make-up and the level of poverty of the residents.

Port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border are primarily made up of Hispanic residents. According to

the U. S. Bureau of the Census (1992) all port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border have populations in which the majority ethnic group is Hispanic. Individuals of Mexican descent make up the vast majority of this ethnic population.

Poverty in areas along the Texas-Mexico border is worse than in any other region of the United States (Maril, 1989). However, the level of poverty is not evenly distributed among the various ethnic groups living there. Hispanic residents in these areas are "six and one-half times more likely to be poor" (Maril, 1989, p. 10) when compared to European American residents. These two features, ethnic make-up and poverty, show that residents of port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border have problems that are unique to this region. One of these problems is lack of education.

Educational Needs of People From Mexico

Seventy percent of all Mexican immigrants come from "sparsely populated regions that exist throughout Mexico - north, central and south" (Rothenberg, 1995, p. 1). Coming from these rural regions, there are few if any educational opportunities. Education is free in Mexico up to the sixth grade; however, many rural areas do not have schools that go beyond the third grade. Rothenberg contends that what schools there are in rural areas of Mexico have only been

started in the last 10 to 12 years. Thus most parents have little or no school themselves.

In Mexico, even educated parents play little if any role in the formal education of their children (Rothenberg, 1995). Teachers are considered the authority; parents do not feel comfortable questioning what goes on in the school. This is opposite to what teachers in the United States want which is a partnership with the parents in their child's education.

In Mexico, values are taught in the home. School is only a place to learn facts and figures. Rothenberg (1995) maintains that values such as independence and civil rights, which are taught in United States schools, conflict with the traditional Mexican values, which are taught at home.

In communities along the Texas-Mexico border, the dominant language is Spanish (Baca, Bryan, McLean-Bardwell & Gomez, 1989; Council for Educational Development and Research, 1994). English is primarily used in the affluent neighborhoods and schools. There is resistance by native Spanish speaking students to learn and use English. Part of the problem is discrimination felt by the Mexican-American population. Another reason for the resistance is the fact that Spanish is the language of commerce in port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border. The Spanish language is so dominant, that one elementary principal from

Laredo commented "The only English that students routinely hear is in the school. And even here, in the cafeteria, on the playground, and in the halls, everything is in Spanish" (Council for Educational Development and Research, 1994, p. 27).

Because of the problems faced by immigrants from rural Mexico - lack of educational opportunities, inexperience in dealing with school settings, conflicts in cultural values, the roles parents see themselves playing in their children's education, and lack of skills in the English language - it is understandable why their children and families "have problems adjusting to school" (Rothenberg, 1995, p. 169) in the United States. As immigrant families from Mexico arrive and settle in their new communities, public schools must find ways to meet the educational needs of this ethnic group.

Middle-grade School Teacher Preparation

The CCAD (1989) stated there is a need for middle-grade school teacher preparation programs. The NMSA (1995) believes that the key to getting more universities to offer middle-grade teacher preparation programs is to have more states offer teacher certification for middle-grade school levels. As of 1992, 33 states offered middle-grade teacher certification or endorsements. This is an increase from 15

states in 1978 and 26 states in 1984 (McEwin, Dickinson, Erb and Scales, 1995).

Scales and McEwin (1994) found that most practicing middle-grade school teachers "graduated from [teacher education] programs that did not have much depth of the middle level content"(p. 21). To prepare teachers to teach middle-grade students appropriately, middle-grade teacher education programs should include course work and preparation experiences focusing on: (a) young adolescent development, (b) curriculum and organization of the middle school, (c) appropriate methods for teaching young adolescents, (d) teaching reading at the middle level, (f) concentration of at least two academic areas at the undergraduate level, (g) academic concentrations that are broad and interdisciplinary, (h) pre-student teaching experiences in the middle-grades, and (i) student teaching in the middle-grades (p. 22). In a later publication, McEwin, Dickinson, Erb and Scales (1995) call the above list the "essential elements" of the education and preparation needed by middle-grade school teachers.

Problem

Middle-grade students deserve teachers who are specially prepared to meet their educational needs. However, Donato and de Onis (1994) contend that research concerning the education and preparation of teachers for

middle-grade school education has focused "on the schooling of White middle-class students to the exclusion of minorities in general and Mexican Americans in particular" (p. 172). A search using on-line data bases was conducted at the Sterling C. Evans Library to locate research concerning middle-grade teacher education for those working with Mexican immigrant students. This search yielded no information.

Researchers have been working and continue to work in the areas of middle-grade teacher education and the education of Mexican immigrant students. In years 1966-96, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) lists 452 research studies concerning middle-grade teacher education. ERIC also lists 18 research studies conducted in the area of education of Mexican immigrant students from 1966-96. However, none of these studies deal with middle-grade teacher education for those working with Mexican immigrant students. Similar results were obtained when other data bases were searched using the same criteria as above. The data bases, along with the years searched, include: a) ERIC (1966-1996), b) Dissertation Abstracts Ondisc (1861-1996), c) PsycInfo (1967-1996), and d) the library holdings of Texas A&M University. Thus the contention by Donato and de Onis seems to have merit.

The Texas-Mexico border area, with a rapidly growing school-age population, will demand increasing numbers of teachers who are prepared to deal with ethnic diversity, cross-cultural interaction, and growing adolescents.

Purpose

In an effort to determine the appropriateness of courses and preparation experiences, as recommended by the NMSA, for new middle-grade school teachers in schools along the Texas-Mexico border, the following study questions were posed:

1. What are the characteristics of the principals, students, teachers, and middle-grade schools located in port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border?
2. In the opinion of principals of middle-grade schools located in port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border, to what degree do the education and preparation experiences, as stated by the NMSA, seem appropriate for new teachers they hire?
3. In the opinion of responding middle-grade school principals, how well do Texas universities prepare teachers to interact and nurture growth in students attending middle-grade schools located in these port of entry communities?

Method

A survey instrument was developed in the fall 1996 (Appendix A). Twenty-three questions asked for demographic data about the principals, middle-grade schools, students and teachers (answering study question 1). Three survey questions asked for written responses, which helped answer study questions, 2 and 3 above. Survey question 27 (answering study question 2) involved ranking courses and experiences suggested as important for the teaching of middle-grade students (McEwin, Dickinson, Erb and Scales, 1995; Scales & McEwin, 1994) and students in schools along the Texas-Mexico border (Baca et al., 1989; Brindley, 1974; Christian, 1994; Donato & de Onis, 1994; Montemayor, 1994; Payne, 1995; Romo, 1984). Survey question 28 (answering study question 3) asked principals to rank how well they believe Texas universities were teaching the courses and experiences listed in the previous survey question.

The survey instrument was piloted by high school administrators, from the Eagle Pass Independent School District (ISD) with previous middle-grade experience, in a test/retest format on November 20 and December 3, 1996. From the pilot study it was learned that responses covering demographic information about principals (survey questions 1-7) were exactly the same in both the test and retest version of the instrument. However, slight variations

occurred in principals' responses to questions asking about the school, teachers, and students (survey questions 8-23). As both sets of responses involved approximations, near matches (e.g. ± 5% where percentages were asked for) were considered to reflect consistency in answering the questions.

No word for word matches were found in the written responses in the test and retest versions for survey questions 24-26. However, themes of the responses were consistent. The responses to the ranked items (survey questions 27 and 28) on the pilot test did not provide meaningful information for this study. Therefore, in consultation with several colleagues, these questions were rewritten. A check of the internal consistency of the revised version of survey questions 27 and 28 with the final data set revealed a standardized item alpha of .73 and .86 respectively. Reliability is affected by the number of response items. Due to the small number of items in each survey question, these reliability alphas are considered adequate to good.

Participants

On February 24, 1997, a survey packet was mailed to 67 principals of middle-grade schools located in port of entry communities along the Texas-Mexico border. These communities were identified by United States Customs

Service, Public Affairs Personnel in Laredo and El Paso, Texas. School districts and middle-grade schools (Appendix B) were identified using the 1996-97 Texas School Directory (Texas Education Agency, 1997b). Each packet included a survey, a cover letter of explanation and encouragement to respond, and a stamped self addressed envelope.

On March 6, 1997, a reminder post card was sent to those principals not yet responding. Three weeks after the initial mailing, a phone call was placed to principals who had not responded. A total of 44 surveys (65.6%) were returned.

Data Analysis

Survey questions 1-23 asked for demographic data about the principals and their schools. The analysis of this data was reported using descriptive statistics.

Survey questions 24-26 asked for limited open ended responses. Data obtained from survey questions 24-26 underwent a content analysis by unitizing data as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The data was sorted into categories, which according to these authors, allowed for new categories to emerge. A written record of each category was kept. A peer debriefer performed a second analysis of the data to establish credibility (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Differences in categorizing data were resolved through discussion.

Survey question 27 asks principals to rank, on a scale of 1-5 course work and preparation experiences new teachers may have in their teacher preparation programs. Items were ranked according to order of importance as determined by the responding principals. A frequency chart was plotted for each item showing the number of ranks per item. A mean score was determined; the lower the mean score, the more important the ranking. One point was given for a 1, two points was given for a 2, and so on. If an item receives twenty 1s, ten 2s and ten 3s, then its score was 70/40=1.75.

An analysis using descriptive statistics was conducted to determine if the desired education and preparation of new middle-grade school teachers for schools along the Texas-Mexico border is different from the suggested courses and preparation experiences of the NMSA (McEwin, Dickinson, Erb and Scales, 1995; Scales & McEwin, 1994).

Survey question 28 asks principals to indicate on a scale of 1-5, how well they perceive teacher education programs preparing students in the areas listed in survey question 27. Items were ranked according to the degree principals' believed these courses and experiences were successfully taught in Texas teacher preparation programs. A mean score was determined in the same fashion as for items in the previous question. The lower the mean score, the better the principals felt this information was covered in

Texas teacher preparation programs. As with the previous survey question, an analysis using descriptive statistics was conducted.

Results

Findings for the three study questions are presented below.

Study Question 1

The combined responses of principals to survey questions 1-23 revealed:

1. Sixty-four percent of the responding principals were male; 72% of all responding principals were Hispanic. European Americans made up 28% of the ethnic population of responding principals.
2. Female principals reported having more total teaching experience than their male counterparts. Approximately 50% of the male and 20% of the female principals reported having no teaching experience in the middle-grades.
3. All principals reported having a Masters Degree and the Texas Mid-Management Administrator Certificate.
4. Middle-grade schools studied are situated in rural, suburban and urban settings. Student populations for schools were as follows: three schools under 500; 10 schools between 500-749; 17 schools between 750-999; six schools between 1,000-1,250; and 8 schools over 1,250.

5. The Hispanic student population in these middle-grade schools averaged 90.5%. European American student populations for these schools averaged 7.7%; five principals reported having no European American students. African American student population averaged at 1.2%; 30 schools had no African American Students. Asian American and Native American students made up less than 1% of the student population; 30 principals reported no Asian American students, 39 principals reported no Native American students.
6. Principals reported 82% of students qualified for the free lunch program. As the Hispanic student population in these schools increased, the percentage of students participating in the free lunch program also increased (Spearman correlation, r=.80).
7. Principals reported that a total of 3,015 teachers work in the 44 schools in this study. Hispanics comprised 67% of the faculty population; European Americans made up 27.7% of the faculty population - two principals reported having no European American teachers in their schools. African Americans made up 1.2% of the teaching population - 26 principals reported having no African American teachers in their schools. Asian American and Native American teachers made up less than 1% of the teaching population combined - eight principals reported having

Asian American teachers on their faculty, one principal reported having a Native American teacher in their school.

8. Compiled data from principals revealed that small schools with student populations under 550 have the smallest range of student/teacher ratios from 8.8/1 to 12.4/1. Two schools with over 1300 students have the largest student/teacher ratio at 18/1.
9. Every reporting principal had at least one novice (first year) teacher on his/her faculty. Principals reported that 180 novice teachers were on the faculty of 42 middle-grade schools. Eighteen of these schools had double digit annual turnover rates. If the reported turnover rates are correct, these 18 schools hire 150 new teachers each year.
10. Full time counselors are reported by principals to be on all 44 campuses. Forty-three principals reported having a full-time nurse and librarian on campus. The smallest rural middle-grade school had a part time nurse and librarian. Only 24 principals reported having a facilitator on their campus.
11. Thirty-eight principals reported that 90% or above of their teachers are fully certified for their positions. In six schools (four rural, two urban) more than 10% of the teachers are not certified to teach the subjects they

are assigned to teach. Half of the rural schools in this study have trouble attracting fully certified teachers to staff all their available positions.

The ethnicity of principals, teachers and students approximately mirror each other in that they are largely Hispanic. This is much different than in most schools in the United States and Texas. National demographic figures for public schools show that European Americans make up 84.2% of principals and 88.8% of teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 1997a, 1997b). The demographic percentages for Texas, as a whole, parallel these national percentages for principals and teachers. In Texas public schools, European Americans make up 47.1% of the student population (Texas Education Agency, 1997a). Student/teacher ratios in large schools along the border are above national average figures of 14.9/1 and Texas figures of 15.7/1 (U.S. Department of Education, 1997b).

Schools along the Texas-Mexico border have excessively large percentages of students living in poverty. Eighty-two percent of students in border middle-grade schools participate in the Federally sponsored free lunch program. The national average for student participation in this program is 33% (U.S. Department of Education, 1997b).

Study Question 2

The combined responses of principals to survey questions 24, 25 and 27 revealed:

1. Responding principals slightly favor secondary certified teachers over elementary certified teachers for middle-grade positions. Those who preferred to hire secondary certified teachers listed their main reasons as: a need for specific content knowledge, and better trained to work with middle-grade school students. Those principals who preferred to hire elementary certified teachers listed their main reasons as: having better knowledge of instructional strategies, and being more student centered. Approximately one-third of the principals reported having no preference in regard to certificate type when hiring for middle-grade positions. These principals stated they would hire the best applicant regardless of certificate type.
2. Responding principals believed that knowledge centered around middle school themes [i.e., (a) cooperative learning, (b) interdisciplinary teaming, (c) student centered instruction] was at least as important for pre-service teachers as their knowledge of pedagogy [i.e., (a) classroom management and discipline, (b) knowledge of curriculum and instruction].

3. When given a list of course work and experiences, it was found that principals ranked the following as being most important: (a) student teaching in the middle-grades, (b) use of appropriate teaching methods for pre- and young adolescents, (c) pre-student teaching field experiences in the middle-grades, (d) knowledge of developmental characteristics and needs of pre- and young adolescents, and (e) knowledge of curriculum and organization in middle-grades. Other items also found to be important include: (a) dealing with the culture of poverty, (b) dealing with the Hispanic culture, and (c) English as a second language certification.

Those items found to be most important by the majority of principals are the "essential elements" of middle-grade teacher preparation (McEwin, Dickinson, Erb and Scales, 1995; Scales & McEwin, 1994). These findings are consistent with the middle school literature. The courses and experiences, suggested as important for new teachers teaching in schools along the Texas-Mexico border, (Baca et al., 1989; Brindley, 1974; Christian, 1994; Donato & de Onis, 1994; Montemayor, 1994; Payne, 1995; Romo, 1984) were found to be important by principals - but not to the same degree as the "essential elements" - for their school setting.

Study Question 3

The combined responses of principals to survey questions 26 and 28 revealed:

1. Principals would like to see pre-service teachers have greater exposure to middle-grade classrooms through more observation experiences and student teaching.
2. Responding principals would like Texas universities to emphasize several themes in teacher education programs. These themes include: middle-grade teaching skills and concepts, classroom management and discipline, curriculum and instruction, and communication with parents, staff, and community.
3. Responding principals believed that teacher preparation programs are best preparing students in the areas of English as a second language certification, bilingual certification, and formal Spanish. However, when ranking the importance of listed course work and experiences, the majority of principals considered these items of less importance than general pedagogical competence.
4. Responding principals believe that Texas universities are adequately preparing pre-service teachers for their classrooms. However, pre-service teachers need more information about working with children and parents who live in the culture of poverty.

For over seventy years there have been calls in the literature for a special focus in education of youth in transition from childhood to adulthood (Koos, 1927; Smith, 1925). The doctrine of the NMSA states that this is best accomplished in middle-grade schools (NMSA, 1995). Today, only 33 states offer middle-grade teacher certification or endorsements. Yet the majority of principals in this study want pre-service teachers to have experiences and knowledge about middle-grade "essential elements" and themes. This is consistent with middle school literature calling for middle-grade teacher preparation programs (Alexander & McEwin, 1994; George & McEwin, 1978; McEwin, 1996; McEwin 1983; McEwin & Alexander, 1987; McEwin & Alexander, 1982; McEwin & Allen, 1985; McEwin, Dickinson, Erb and Scales, 1995; Scales & McEwin, 1994). However, in addition to middle-grade "essential elements" and themes, pre-service teachers going to port of entry communities need additional knowledge concerning the culture of poverty (Haberman, 1995; Payne, 1995).

Discussion

Demographic information concerning principals, students, and teachers reveal that these groups are different from those found in most middle-grade schools in the United States. Hispanics, a national ethnic minority

culture, are the majority and dominant culture in all three categories of schools along the Texas-Mexico border.

The literature documents that a unique set of problems and circumstances exist when working with students and families in this border region (Council for Educational Development and Research, 1994; Hurtado, 1995; McWilliams, 1982; Payne, 1995; Romo, 1984; Rothenberg, 1995). Given the fact that members of this culture are increasing in number and may soon become the dominant ethnic group in Texas, their educational needs can no longer be ignored. This includes getting certified teachers into all classrooms. This is especially a problem in rural areas where responses from principals indicated that half of the rural schools cannot attract all the certified teachers they need for their students.

From the reported data, larger schools in the study have higher student/teacher ratios in classes than smaller schools. As cited by Mostelier, Light and Sachs (1996), this may not allow teachers to give students one-on-one instruction which is an effective way of helping students succeed. Thus creating interdisciplinary teams with common students in core courses becomes even more important for large schools in this study.

Principals reported they highly value new teachers who have an understanding of themes centered around the middle

school. Course work and experiences found to be of most value for new teachers by principals of border middle-grade schools are: (a) student teaching in the middle-grades, (b) use of appropriate teaching methods for pre- and young adolescents, (c) pre-student teaching field experiences in the middle-grades, (d) knowledge of the developmental characteristics and needs of pre- and young adolescents, and (e) knowledge of the curriculum and organization of middle-grades. These are the essential elements of a middle-grade teacher preparation program. This is consistent with the middle school literature.

It is interesting to note that responding principals found middle school themes as important as general pedagogical themes. However present teacher preparation programs in Texas do not have to concentrate instruction in these areas because there is no certification or endorsement for the middle grade school level. The NMSA (1995) states that the key to getting more universities to offer middle grade teacher preparation programs is to have more states offer teacher certification or endorsements for middle grade school levels. However, Texas is only one of 17 states which still does not offer a middle grade school endorsement or certificate (McEwin, Dickinson, Erb & Scales, 1995). Because principals participating in this study felt so strongly about new teachers having knowledge of middle

school themes and "essential elements", it may be time for Texas to look at adding the middle school endorsement to the present teaching certificates offered.

While Texas teacher preparation programs are believed to be adequately preparing new teachers, it is obvious from the principals' standpoints that there is room for improvement. Principals would like to see more time/experiences in: (a) observation and student teaching in the middle-grades, (b) "essential elements" and themes in middle-grade teaching, (c) general pedagogical knowledge, and (d) knowledge of the culture of poverty.

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APPENDIX A

MIDDLE-GRADE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SURVEY

TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER 1997

MIDDLE-GRADE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SURVEY
TEXAS -- MEXICO BORDER 1997

DIRECTIONS -- CIRCLE AND/OR FILL IN THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE(S) TO THE FOLLOWING

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. **GENDER**

   a. Female b. Male

2. **ETHNICITY**

   a. African American/Black c. Latino(a) e. Anglo
   b. Asian/Pacific Islander d. Native American f. Other

3. **YEARS AS MIDDLE-GRADE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

   a. 1 - 3 c. 10 - 14
   b. 4 - 9 d. 15 or more

4. **YEARS OF CLASSROOM TEACHING EXPERIENCE AT THE MIDDLE-GRADE LEVEL**

   a. 1 - 3 c. 10 - 14 e. none
   b. 4 - 9 d. 15 or more

5. **TOTAL YEARS OF CLASSROOM TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

   a. 1 - 3 c. 10 - 14
   b. 4 - 9 d. 15 or more

6. **HIGHEST DEGREE HELD**

   a. Bachelors b. Masters c. Doctoral

7. **TEACHING CERTIFICATES HELD**

   a. Superintendent d. Supervisor
   b. Mid-Management Administrator e. Counselor
   c. Temporary Mid-Management f. Original Teaching Field

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

8. **SCHOOL LOCATION**

   a. Urban b. Suburban c. Rural

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9. NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL _____

10. PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT ETHNIC POPULATIONS IN YOUR SCHOOL

a. African American/Black _____% c. Latino(a) _____% e. Anglo _____%
b. Asian/Pacific Islander _____% d. Native American _____% f. Other _____%

11. PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL POPULATION PARTICIPATING IN THE FREE LUNCH PROGRAM _____%

12. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY ETHNIC POPULATIONS IN YOUR SCHOOL

a. African American/Black _____% c. Latino(a) _____% e. Anglo _____%
b. Asian/Pacific Islander _____% d. Native American _____% f. Other _____%

13. WHAT IS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FACULTY MEMBERS IN YOUR SCHOOL? _____

14. HOW MANY OF YOUR CLASSROOM TEACHERS ARE FIRST YEAR TEACHERS? _____

15. WHAT SUPPORT PERSONNEL ARE AVAILABLE AT YOUR SCHOOL?

(circle all that apply to your school)

a. Counselor Full Time / Part Time c. Librarian Full Time / Part Time
b. Nurse Full Time / Part Time d. Facilitators Full Time / Part Time

16. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR FACULTY ARE GRADUATES OF TEXAS UNIVERSITIES? _____

17. WHAT IS THE AVERAGE ANNUAL TURNOVER RATE FOR FACULTY IN YOUR SCHOOL? _____

18. OF THOSE FACULTY LEAVING ANNUALLY, WHAT PERCENTAGE DID NOT GRADUATE FROM A TEXAS UNIVERSITY? _____

19. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR TEACHERS ARE FULLY CERTIFIED FOR THE SUBJECT AND GRADE LEVEL THEY ARE TEACHING?

a. 90% and above c. 70% - 79% e. 50% - 59%
b. 80% - 89% d. 60% - 69% f. Less than 50%

20. HOW MANY OF YOUR TEACHERS (NUMBER) ARE: ELEMENTARY CERTIFIED? _____
SECONDARY CERTIFIED? _____

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21. HOW MANY OF YOUR TEACHERS ARE IN AN ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM? _____

22. HOW MANY OF YOUR TEACHERS ARE WORKING UNDER AN EMERGENCY CERTIFICATE? _____

23. HOW MANY PERMANENT SUBSTITUTES ARE IN YOUR CLASSROOMS AS TEACHERS? _____

EDUCATION AND PREPARATION PREFERENCES

24. CERTIFICATION PREFERENCE FOR HIRING MIDDLE-GRADE SCHOOL TEACHERS

a. Elementary b. Secondary c. No Preference

Please list your reason(s) for the choice indicated above _____

25. LIST THREE IMPORTANT IDEAS, PRINCIPLES, OR UNDERSTANDINGS THAT NEW TEACHERS NEED TO HAVE WHEN THEY COME TO WORK IN YOUR SCHOOL.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

26. LIST THREE CHANGES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE WAY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ARE EDUCATED AND PREPARED THAT YOU FEEL COULD IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE AS EDUCATORS IN YOUR SCHOOL SETTING.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

27. **PLEASE RANK ON A SCALE OF 1-5, WITH 1 BEING "ESSENTIAL" AND 5 BEING "OF NO IMPORTANCE", THE FOLLOWING LIST OF COURSE WORK AND EXPERIENCES FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS THAT YOU FEEL WOULD BETTER PREPARE THEM FOR TEACHING IN YOUR SCHOOL SETTING.**

Essential 1 | Very Important 2 | Important 3 | Little Importance 4 | Of No Importance 5

1. _____ Courses focusing on the developmental characteristics and needs of young adolescents (ages 10 - 15).
2. _____ Courses leading to bilingual certification.
3. _____ Courses focusing directly on the curriculum and organization of the middle level school.
4. _____ Courses leading to ESL certification.
5. _____ Courses focusing on appropriate teaching methods for young adolescents (ages 10 - 15).
6. _____ Courses dealing with the culture of Latino(a) students.
7. _____ Courses enabling students to have more than one subject teaching field.
8. _____ Courses in formal Spanish.
9. _____ Pre-student teaching field experiences in the middle grades (grades 6-9).
10. _____ Student teaching in the middle grades (grade 6 - 9).
11. _____ Courses dealing with the culture of poverty.
12. _____ Other (please specify) _____
13. _____ Other (please specify) _____
14. _____ Other (please specify) _____

28. **HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN TEXAS PREPARE TEACHERS IN THE AREAS INDICATED IN QUESTION #27?**

	Very Well	Adequately	Inadequately	Poorly	Not At All
Item #1					
Item #2					
Item #3					
Item #4					
Item #5					
Item #6					
Item #7					
Item #8					
Item #9					
Item #10					
Item #11					
Item #12					
Item #13					
Item #14					

29. **WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW THAT WOULD HELP ME GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF NEW TEACHERS' PREPARATION NEEDS FOR WORKING ON THE TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER?**

a. Yes b. No

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY IN THE ENCLOSED SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

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APPENDIX B

LIST OF MIDDLE-GRADE SCHOOLS SURVEYED BY DISTRICT

Brownsville ISD
Cummings Middle School
Faulk Middle School
Central Middle School
Stell Middle School
Oliveira Middle School
Perkins Middle School
Filemon B. Vela Middle School
Raul Besteiro Jr. Middle School

El Paso ISD
Henderson Middle School
Ross Middle School
Canyon Hills Middle School
Gullen Middle School
Charles Middle School
Morehead Middle School
Magoffin Middle School
Terrace Hills Middle School
Bassett Middle School
Lincoln Middle School
Harold Wiggs Middle School
Manual D. Hornedo Middle School
MacArther El-Int. School

Ysleta ISD
Parkland Middle School
Eastwood Middle School
Riverside Middle School
Hillcrest Middle School
Ysleta Middle School
Valley View Middle School
Desert View Middle School
Ranchland Hills Middle School
Indian Ridge Middle School
Camino Real Middle School

Socorro ISD
Socorro Middle School
Salvador Sanchez Middle School
William Slider Middle School
Capt. Walter E. Clark Middle School

Hidalgo ISD
Diaz Junior High School

McAllen ISD
Lamar Middle School
Travis Middle School
Lincoln Middle School
Brown Middle School
Morris Middle School
De Leon Middle School

Parr - San Juan - Alamo ISD
Austin Junior High School
Alamo Middle School
Lyndon B. Johnson Junior High School
Memorial Middle School

Progreso ISD
Progreso Middle School

Fort Hancock ISD
Fort Hancock School

Eagle Pass ISD
Eagle Pass Junior High School
Memorial Junior High School

Presidio ISD
Franco Middle School

Rio Grande City ISD
Grulla Middle School
Ringgold Middle School

Roma ISD
Roma Middle School

Laredo ISD
Christian Middle School
Lamar Middle School
Joaquin Cigarroa Middle School
Memorial Middle School

United ISD
United Middle School
United South Middle School
Clark Middle School
Trautman Middle School
George Washington Middle School
Los Obispos Middle School
Salvador Garcia Middle School

San Felipe - Del Rio CISD

Del Rio Middle School
San Felipe Middle School